

US NAVY SUPPORTS INFECTIOUS DISEASE PREVENTION IN THE REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

A team of US Navy scientists from Navy Environmental and Preventative Medicine Unit Six (NEPMU-6) traveled to Majuro and Ebeye in the Republic of the Marshall Islands in January 2020 to work with local authorities from the Ministry of Health and Human Services and other regional partners to conduct training sessions to strengthen the local government's ability to conduct disease prevention and control.



Majuro Local Government personnel perform water quality tests along with HM3 Richard Okpani (NEPMU-6 preventive medicine technician) after proper instruction.

Photo Credit: LCDR Joe Moralez.

“Our specialized team of preventive medicine experts is operating at peak performance trying to support various levels of RMI’s public health programs from policy to execution,” said Lt. Sarah Jenkins, NEPMU-6 Republic of the Marshall Islands Mission Lead. “I am very proud of our team for being flexible, intuitive, and resourceful to provide the quality training and education to strengthen relationships and increase the partner nation’s public health capabilities. Our team is glad we can contribute to global health engagement missions and we hope to continue to support RMI through these activities.”



HM3 Richard Okpani (NEPMU-6 Preventive Medicine Technician) assists members of the RMI Vector Control Team with mosquito trap deployment. US Navy photo by

LCDR Adam Strong.

Training on this visit included practicing “train the trainer” evolutions with local Majuro government personnel on water quality testing and practical instruction on deployment of mosquito traps and mosquito identification. The team also worked with Majuro Hospital laboratory personnel on the use of the BioFire FilmArray, a rapid diagnostic tool for the detection of respiratory and gastrointestinal diseases.



HN Molina (NEPMU-6 Medical Laboratory Technician) demonstrates the BioFire FilmArray, a rapid diagnostic equipment for the detection of respiratory and gastrointestinal diseases for Majuro Hospital laboratory personnel. Photo Credit: LCDR Joe Morales.

“Thank you to your team for all your help during the dengue outbreak and continued support,” said Glorine A. Jeadrik, Assistant Secretary for the Kwajalein Atoll Healthcare Ministry of Health and Human Services.

“The biggest issue is there is no one assigned full time for vector or water/food, and EPA counterparts have to support. Basically all the programs are collaterals for people right now since our staff have all primary jobs as well. We look forward to your next visit to continuing assisting us.”

The NEPMU-6 team on this visit included Lt. Cmdr. Joe Moralez (Environmental Health/Industrial Hygiene Officer), Lt. Cmdr. Adam Strong (Entomologist), Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class William Martinez and Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Richard Okpani (Preventive Medicine Technicians), and Hospitalman Gian Molina (Medical Laboratory Technician.) NEPMU-6 is based on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam in Hawaii and is charged with maximizing the mission readiness of operational forces in the Pacific Theater by providing specialized public health services that enhance force health protection.